

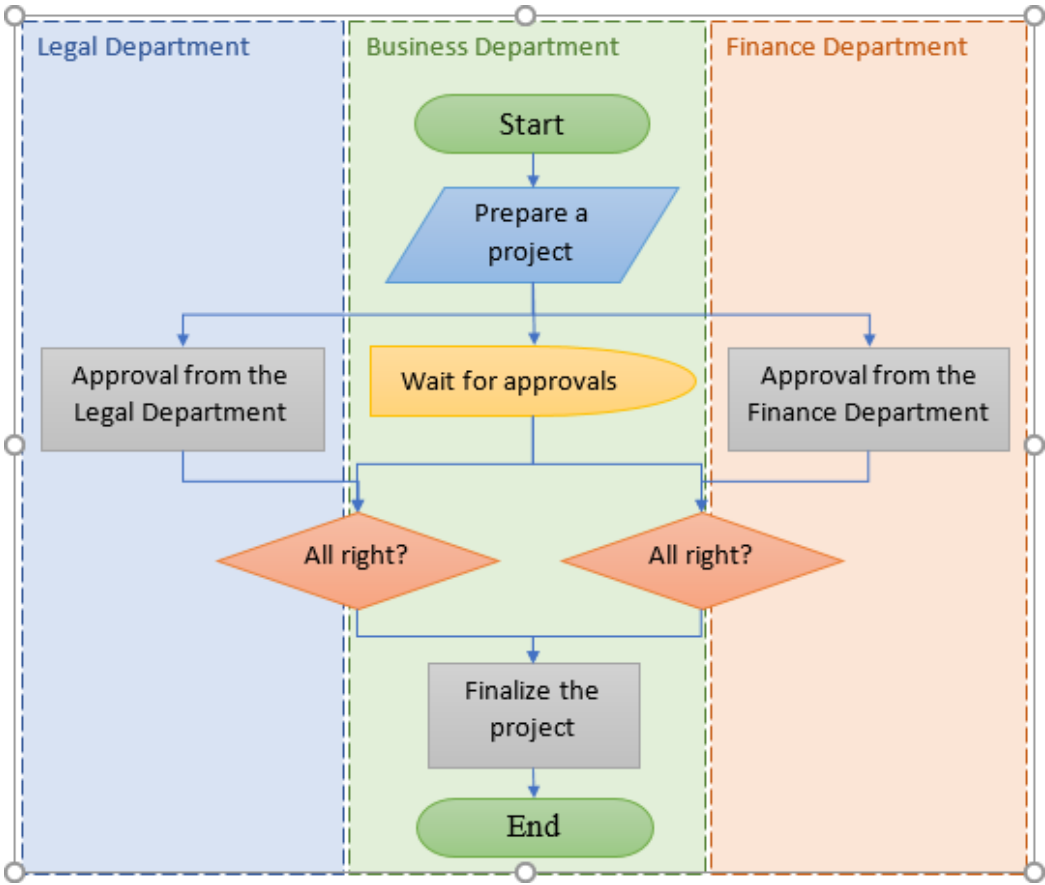
# How to create a flowchart in Word

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## Word 2016 ▼

A flowchart or flow chart usually shows steps of the task, process or workflow. There are many different SmartArt templates predefined in Microsoft Word that you can use to make a flowchart, including visually appealing templates with pictures. However, if you have a process with a complex flow or you need a custom layout it is better to build a flowchart using rectangular, diamond, round and other box types.



Flow charts usually assign specific symbols for different types of entities, actions, etc. E.g.:



Rectangle with round corners is used for starting and terminating states



Rectangle with straight corners is used for process stages



Parallelogram is used for data input/output illustration



Diamond is used for conditional branching



Arrow is used to show the process flow

All these and other useful visual elements you can find in the **Shapes** dropdown list of the **Insert** tab of Microsoft Word.

To create a flowchart like the one above, follow the next steps (we recommend to check the tip [how to easily organize shapes in Word](#), which simplify drawing):

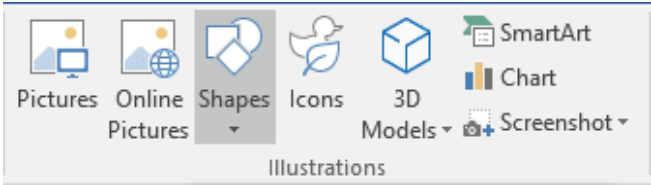
## Add the drawing canvas

It is important to add the drawing canvas before adding the flow shapes because it allows you to use the flowchart connectors:

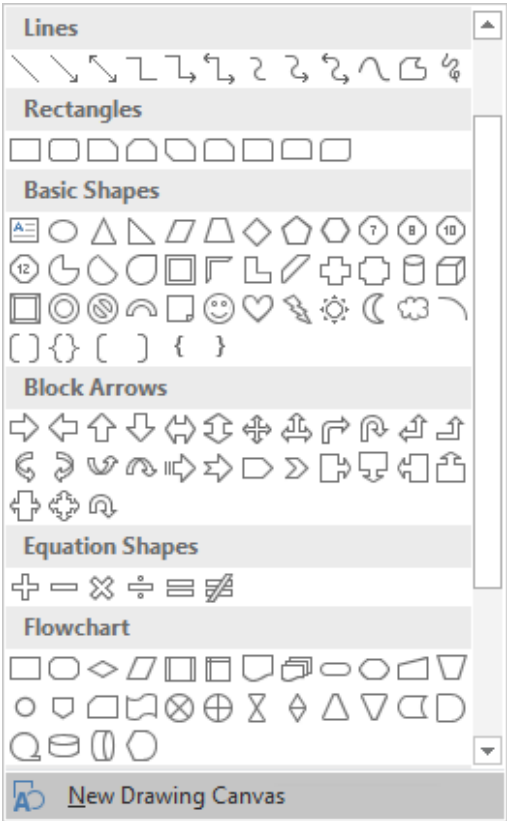
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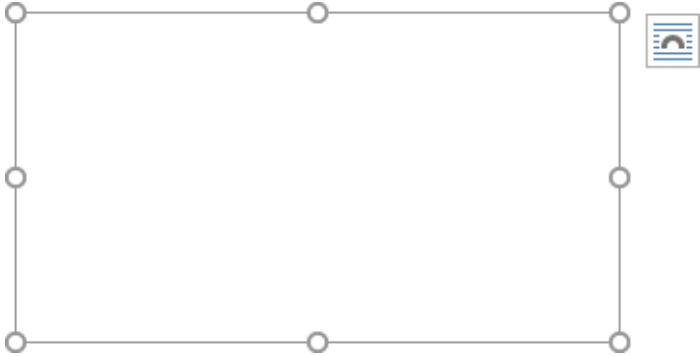
1. On the **Insert** tab, in the **Illustrations** group, click **Shapes**:



2. On the **Shapes** list, in the bottom, choose **New Drawing Canvas**:



Word adds the new drawing canvas to your flow chart:



## Draw the flowchart blocks

3. On the **Shapes** list, in the **Flowchart** group, choose the item that you want to add:



4. To add text in the selected shape, just double-click in it and enter the text.

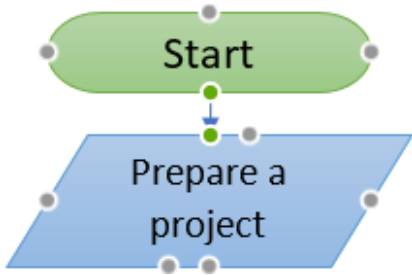
## Connect the flowchart blocks by connectors

5. To connect shapes, do the following:

- On the **Insert** tab, in the **Illustrations** group, click in the **Shapes** list and then select one of the connectors in the **Lines** group:



- Select the beginning point in a border of the first shape and the ending point in a border of the second shape:



For customizations of shapes and connectors see [how to change format of diagram shapes in Word](#) and [how to change flowchart shapes](#) or [how to change connector type for flowchart](#).

See also this tip in French: [Comment créer un organigramme des opérations dans Word](#).

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to ask OfficeToolTips team.

ASK QUESTION

See Also


### How to change flowchart shapes

Business process charts like employee routines, document preparation and approval, or online user navigation path on a website or a Web store are different from academic flows of algorithms. Usually academic applications use a limited number of standard shape types, but in business, different shapes give a better look and simplify understanding. However, it is hard to decide which shape is appropriate for the specific block.


In Microsoft Office in general and in Word you don't need to plan the flow design because you can easily change the shape outline at any stage.

To change flowchart shapes in Word, do the following:

1. Select the shape you want to change:



2. Under **Drawing Tools**, on the **Format** tab, in the **Insert Shapes** group, select **Edit Shape** dropdown list:

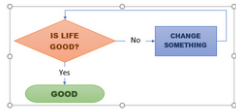


[How to change flowchart shapes](#)

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### How to add text to the connector in the flowchart


When you create the process flow chart, process map, business flow diagram or data flow diagrams and UML activity diagrams you often need to add some text or labels to the connectors. Unlike many other free and commercial diagram drawing packages, Microsoft Office shapes provide extremely rich text formatting features.



To add labels to connector, do the following:

1. Create the text box by using one of the following ways:

- On the **Insert** tab, in the **Text** group, click **Text Box** button:




[How to add text to the connector in the flowchart](#)

When you create the process flow chart, process map, business flow diagram or data flow diagrams and UML activity diagrams you often need to add some text or labels to the connectors. Unlike many other free and commercial diagram drawing packages, Microsoft Office shapes provide extremely rich text formatting features.

### How to show/hide nonprintable symbols in a Word document

Microsoft Word has many types of **nonprintable** symbols such as different types of spaces, tabulations, line or page breaks, etc. The non-printable symbols are also known as **Whitespace characters** in typography, **nonprinting characters** in the previous versions of Microsoft products, or **formatting marks**.

You can show or hide, if you see a lot of strange symbols in the document, some or all of these symbols by clicking the button **Show/Hide ¶** (or pressing **Ctrl+¶** or **Ctrl+Shift+¶**):



**Note:**

- Each of nonprintable characters that you will see after highlighting this button, can be selected and removed from the document. Also, you can select, delete or replace all occurrences of a particular kind of special symbols, see [Replacing special characters](#).
- There are some other useful elements that you can use in a document such as bookmarks, fields, etc. You can show and

[How to show/hide nonprintable symbols in a Word document](#)

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